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# PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

VOL. XXVII.

APRIL 5, 1912.

No. 14.

## A NOTE ON A PECULIARITY OF PLAGUE ON THE HAMAKUA COAST OF HAWAII.

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The writer has recently had occasion to study the data bearing on the prevalence of plague on Hawaii, the largest of the islands of the Hawaiian group. The results in one respect are of unusual interest.

Cases of plague in human beings and in rodents have occurred on the island since 1900. At present the disease is occurring rather extensively among rats on the north coast of the island, known locally as the Hamakua Coast. When the study of the disease in man in this region was undertaken, it was found that all of the cases but one had the bubo in the neck. It is well known that the experience in plague generally is that only a small percentage of buboes are in the neck. For comparison it seemed desirable to study the facts with reference to the cases that had occurred elsewhere on the island of Hawaii.

The figures are given in parallel columns.

### *Plague on Hawaii.*

	Plague on Hawaii other than the Hamakua Coast, 1900-1912.		Plague on the Ham- akua Coast, 1910- 1912.	
	Number.	Per cent of all.	Number.	Per cent of all.
Cases under 15 years.....	16	38+	4	40
Cases over 15 years.....	26	62-	6	60
Location of buboes:				
Cervical.....	1	2+	9	90
Axillary.....			1	10
Inguinal.....	36	86-		
Axillary and inguinal.....	5	12-		

The facts in regard to the location of the buboes are very striking. Plague in the island other than that on the Hamakua Coast shows the usual preponderance of cases with inguinal buboes (86 per cent),

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while in the case of plague on the Hamakua Coast the bulk of the cases (90 per cent) had buboes in the cervical region, while none had them in the inguinal region and but one had an axillary bubo.

The number of cases in the Hamakua Coast group is, of course, small, and it is barely possible that it may be merely a coincidence that all but one had cervical buboes, but the writer is inclined to believe that another explanation must be sought.

It is well known that when plague is induced in experimental animals by feeding infected material, in the great majority of cases a bubo develops in the neck; hence one is justified in suspecting that when a series of cases in human beings occur in which cervical buboes predominate we must consider it at least possible that the usual mode of transmission (through fleas) may not have operated in these cases, and that ingestion may have played a part.

It seems clear that regardless of the direct mode of infection, rats are the primary source of the human cases, as large numbers of plague-infected rats are being taken on the Hamakua Coast.

The writer is indebted to Dr. J. S. B. Pratt, president of the Territorial board of health, for the data employed in preparing this note.